

KISHUN KOOVUR.



A
TRAGEDY
IN FIVE ACTS.

BY
SOOBROW,
DEWAN

10
HIS HIGHNESS THE RAJAH
OF
TRAVANCORE.

TREVANDRUM:

PRINTED AT THE GOVERNMENT PRESS.

1840

PREFACE.

A PERUSAL of the train of events, which led to the tragical fate of the Princess *Kishun Koorur* of Oodai-poor, as given in Sir John Malcolm's "Central India", having made a deep impression on the Author's mind, and suggested the idea, that the subject might be formed into a dramatic piece, in the shape of a Tragedy, the Author commenced writing it several years ago, more as a recreation in his leisure hours, and to comply with the wishes of some of his friends, than with any intention of printing and publishing the production.

Since the work has been finished, several English Gentlemen have perused it, and some of them being the Author's friends, were kind enough to express favourable opinions regarding it. Such encomiums the Author entirely attributes to their friendly partiality and indulgence, rather than to any intrinsic merits of the composition itself, which, he knows, it does not possess. Latterly, His Highness the Rajah, the master of the Author, having expressed a wish, that this work should be printed in His Press, which the Travancore Government had lately established

at this place, it was done so, in obedience to the wishes of His Highness, who, it is needless to mention, stands so highly distinguished among the Princes of Hindoostan for enlightened views and munificence in encouraging all sorts of literary pursuits, as well as scientific researches.

Thus, a piece, merely written for private amusement, is become at once an object of public gaze, and its errors, which privacy had thrown a friendly shade upon, stand now prominently forth in the glaring light of publicity. Under these circumstances, the Author, being well aware of his utter insufficiency, to produce a literary work of this kind, and of the manifold demerits of the present production, has nothing left him but humbly to apologize to the public for his having assumed the responsible character of an Author, and to crave their utmost indulgence in their judgments upon the drama in question. To the British critic the Author has only to observe, that this is the production of a *Native* of Hindoostan; and this simple statement, it is hoped, will not only be sufficient to blunt his shafts of justly merited censure, but also calculated to make him view, with a favourable eye, this puny attempt at an English dramatic composition by a foreigner.

THE AUTHOR.

TREVANDRUM:

29th February 1840.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Men.

Maun Sing, Rajah of Joud-
poor.

Savoi Sing, his Dewan.

His Moonshy.

His General.

Jaggut Sing, the Rajah of Jai-
poor.

His Bückshy.

His Sycophant.

Maha Ranah, the Rajah of
Oodaipoor.

Adjeet Sing, his favourite.

Sugvan Sing, the Chief of Ka-
radar, and a relation of Ma-
ha Ranah.

Officers, Servants, &c.

Holkar.

His Minister, a Brahmin.

Ameerkhan, Holkar's Gene-
ral.

Ameerkhan's Jemadar.

Do.'s Brother-in-law.

Do.'s Khansamah.

Women.

Queen of Oodaipoor.

Kishun Koovur, her
Daughter.

Chandboi, sister of Maha
Ranah.

Maid of Kishun Koovur.

KISHUN KOOVUR.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I. A MAGNIFICENT HALL IN THE PALACE OF
JOUDEPOOR. TIME, EARLY IN THE MORNING.

Enter Maun Sing the Rajah.

Maun. I am in a strange dilemma, indeed : I know, my Dewan *Savoi Sing* is a dangerous man ; can I get rid of him by dismissing him at once from his Office ? No ! It is hazardous ; for he will surely instigate all the malcontent Sirdars of my Durbar, and raise conspiracies against me. And how can I retain *him*, who would have *Dhokul Sing* to be placed on the throne ? He is naturally very obstinate, and always violently bent on whatever becomes the object of his pursuit :—but here he comes.

Enter Savoi Sing.

Savoi. Sir, the tranquillity and the peace of this kingdom require, that I should be positive in urging the necessity of admitting the claims of *Dhokul Sing* to the throne : the general voice of the people must convince You fully, how dangerous it is to withhold it from its lawful owner.

Maun. Do you suppose, Dewan, that I am ignorant of my duty towards our deceased sovereign, my brother, *Bheem Sing*? Am I so ungrateful as to deprive his only son, the amiable Prince *Dhokul Sing*, of his right? No! God forbid, that I myself should become my own bitterest enemy, by acting against the reasonable dictates of my conscience! But be not hasty; I will in the first place make some needful arrangements in all the important affairs of the realm, and then shall lose no time in placing the Prince upon the musnud of his father; do you understand me?

Savoi. Ay, perfectly Sir! (*aside*) His lust of power is too strongly rooted in him to be subdued by ordinary means of persuasion; but the stratagem which I have already devised has a great chance of success in this affair. (*to Maun Sing*) Your reasons on this point are very excellent; but to apprise You of some other important matter was the chief errand of my coming to You so early in the morning.

Maun. What is it, Dewan?

Savoi. Why, Sir, it is about *Kishun Koovur*, the

most beautiful and accomplished Princess of Oodai-poor, who, You know, had been already betrothed to our deceased monarch. *Lheem Sing.*

Maun. Well, this being a matter of great consequence, I wish to have a long conference with you about it; but an urgent business requires, that I should leave you for a little while. *(Exit)*

Savai A considerable time ago I have written a letter to my friend at Jaipoor: it must certainly have excited in the heart of *Jaggut Sing* the desire of obtaining the hand of *Kishun Koorur*. I cannot comprehend, why the answer is delayed so long.— But here comes the Moonshee!

Enter Moonshee with a letter in his hand.

Moon. Sir, I have just received this letter express by the Dank of Jaipoor, which according to your order I have brought to you immediately.

Savai Well done! come open and read it to me.

Moon. *(Opens and reads)* “ I received your favor of the 15th ultimo, and when I had read it to the Rajah, it kindled in him the fire of love to a degree beyond belief, in consequence of which, he immediately dispatched his letters to Oodaipoor, and has lately received a satisfactory answer from *Maha Ranah*, who having accepted his suit, expresses his particular pleasure in having him for his son-in-law, in preference to all other princes of Rajapootanah.”

Savoi. This is very unfortunate, indeed; his success seems to be certain; but I did not expect that it would so soon come to that point. Moonshee, we must prevent this from taking place at all events.

Moon. Do you mean the marriage between *Jaggut Sing* and the Princess of Oodai-poor?

Savoi. Ay, to be sure, the same.

Moon. Why Sir, was it not yourself, who incited *Jaggut Sing* to sue for this matrimonial alliance?

Savoi. Yes, what then? I did it for no other purpose than to raise commotions and bloodshed in the states of Rajapootanah, and thereby to attain the object I have in view.

Moon. Surely, this is an impenetrable mystery! But Sir, how can you prevent it now, after the matter is gone so far?

Savoi. Ay, to prevent it? nothing is easier,—but here the Rajah comes, withdraw to the next room and come back again when I am alone. (*Exit Moonshee.*)

Enter Maun Sing.

Maun. Well, Dewan, you seem to be very pensive; pray what have you to tell me about *Kishun Koovur*?

Savoi. Why, Sir, the subject is too serious to be disregarded, because, when the honor of this Court is at stake, I cannot help being restless. You know already, Sir, that the hand of this Princess had been long ago promised to our deceased monarch.

Maun. I do ; but what then ?

Savoi. Why, Sir, shall we tamely suffer the prize to be borne away by *Jaggut Sing*, the Rajah of Jaiipoor ?

Maun. By no means ! Is any thing stirring now about a nuptial treaty between the Courts of Jaiipoor and Oodaipoor ?

Savoi. Oh, Sir, the business is almost finished ; I am disgusted at the very thought of it : this infuriated *Maha Ranah* of Oodaipoor has already fixed his choice upon *Jaggut Sing*, as his son-in-law, and the marriage is likely to be celebrated within a very short time.

Maun. This is too bad ! We must support our claims, and preserve our honour at all hazards.

Savoi. Yes, You are in the right ; but how can we effect it, unless we go to war with Your rival *Jaggut Sing* ?

Maun. Ay, it is impossible ; let us then, with all possible expedition, procure first the alliance of Scindia, and then let us try to get succour from the British Government through the means of *Sir John Malcolm*, who resides now at Delhi.

Savoi. I shall lose no time in doing every thing that is practicable in this weighty affair ; and God will doubtless grant us success in this our just undertaking. (*Exit Maun Sing*) Ha, he is completely caught ; now I will teach him to bow to my superior wisdom ; I will, by my magic, render his crown more ponde-

rous to him, than he ever thought it would be, and then reduce him to the necessity of divesting himself of that burden, which he will of course be very glad to put upon the head of *Dhokul Sing*.

Enter Moonshee.

Moon. I am ready at your service; have you any commands for me?

Savoi. Yes, I would have you write two letters, one to Scindia, and the other to *Sir John Malcolm*, requesting their assistance in the war, which we are going to wage against *Jaggut Sing*.

Moon. I will write them both presently (*sits down to write*).

Savoi. (*Traverses the room in deep meditation, and after a pause addresses the Moonshee*) Well, have you done?

Moon. Yes, Sir, here are the letters; please to sign them.

Savoi. (*Signs and delivers them again to the Moonshee*) Here, take them, and send them immediately by the *Dauk* of this day; but stop, write another to *Jaggut Sing*, in which apprize him fully and faithfully of what is going on here against him; and let him know likewise, that he shall have reason to repent, if he should not exert himself in making vigorous preparations to support his claim to *Kishun Koovur*, whom her father has already promised him in marriage. Do you understand my meaning?

Moon. Ay, as clearly as there is a sun in the sky.
(*writes and gives the letters*).

Savoi. (*Returns it after signing*) Come, make all possible haste and send this letter to Jaipoor, that it may reach there in proper time.

Moon. Very well, Sir, I will obey your commands punctually ; but pray, Sir, why do you excite and encourage both *Maun Sing* and his rival at once ? I am entirely at a loss to account for this glaring inconsistency in your conduct.

Savoi. This is nothing but a common political manœver ; do you understand ?

Moon. Not so clearly, Sir ; will you be so kind as to explain to me the meaning of that mysterious word *political* ?

Savoi. Ay, it refers to an abstruse science, in which are laid down certain rules, whereby the most detestable vices are made to pass for exalted virtues, and the man is taught to change like the camelion according to circumstances ; but none but those, who have any talents for it, can learn this science to any advantage and perfection.

Moon. Thank God, I have no talents for such an abominable science ! But why do you trouble your head about it, and what profit do you expect to reap from it ?

Savoi. You empty headed simpletons are but very poor judges of the noble deeds of us, statesmen. My

head, you know, is well stocked with many devices, contrivances, systems, and plans of all descriptions. I should be wanting in my duty towards society, if I would not make use of some of them in this critical juncture, in establishing the public tranquillity of this state, which is now sadly disturbed by this usurper.

Moon. Very true, Sir; but remember also, you may be wanting in your duty towards yourself, if you do not preserve that head (or as you would have it, that store house) from external injury; because, I know, either the brains are knocked out of such heads, as you represent yours to be, or sometimes they are severed entirely from their seat; but God preserve yours, which I hope you will carry safe on your shoulders.

Savoi. Pshaw! Pusillanimity is undoubtedly the cause of many groundless fears and gloomy anticipations; but enough now! *(Exeunt;)*

SCENE II. A SUPERB SALOON IN THE PALACE
OF JAIPOOR.

Enter Jaggut Sing, the Rajah, his Buckshy, and a Sycophant.

Jaggut. So, by the last letter, *Maun Sing* seems determined to wage war with me, on account of *Kishun Koovur*. Well, *Buckshy*, what answer have you received from *Sir John Malcolm*, about the alliance of the British Government, which we have solicited through his means?

Buck. Sir, the answer unfortunately is negative ; but luckily the same reply, I am told, was given to our enemy ; of course, the English will remain neutral in our present contest.

Jaggut. So much the better—then let us apply to *Holkar* for his aid ; he will I dare say be very glad to assist me in this affair ; because I am informed, that Scindia, in compliance with the request of *Maun Sing*, has already despatched part of his army to Joudpoor, under the command of two of his Sirdars to assist him.

Buck. Very true : *Holkar* will send us a large army, but it will cost us very dear, on account of the enormous expences, which these auxiliaries will oblige us to undergo.

Jaggut. Ay, to be sure, that is a serious business.

Syco. But the inestimable beauty of *Kishun Koo-vur* is worth all the gold of the world : and shew me, who but our Rajah is worthy to possess her ?

Buck. None, indeed : but the just prince must always disregard his personal happiness, when he is sure that the public welfare of his country is to be affected thereby.

Jaggut. Ay, but you are wrong there : will not the reputation of Jaipoor be eclipsed, if the Rajah of Joudpoor marry the Princess of Oodaipoor ? what think you of that ?

Buck. Oh ! that is a different case altogether, which certainly requires our particular attention.

Syco. (*to the Rajah*) Your Highness' argument is incontrovertible. (*to Buckshy*) Are you now fully convinced of the propriety and necessity of undertaking this war, be its expences what they may?

Buck. Yes, I am. (*aside*) Moreover, I am well convinced of the strength of the argument, which flatterers adduce in support of their credulous masters. (*to the Rajah*) Then I shall immediately write a letter to *Holkar* upon this subject (*sits down to write*).

Jaggut. (*to Sycephant*) Well, my friend, what is your opinion about the advantages of our sublunary state.

Syco. Why, Sir, I value it only on account of the riches and pleasures which it contains.

Jaggut. I am of the same opinion with you; but many, I know, are not satisfied with my conduct; and you know already there are murmurs against me in the city.

Syco. Ay, some wretches, who are ignorant of the true nature of things, and being deluded by some old books, are foolish enough, to desire the world to be new modelled according to their chimerical plans: let us leave them to themselves, and follow quietly the dictates of our reason.

Jaggut. But they say, and maintain, that love of women, wine and all other luxuries of the kind, are so many vices, which are surely to be punished in the next world! I myself cannot help shuddering at the very thought of hell.

Syco. Ay, the essential part of priestcraft consists in keeping the credulous constantly in awe of future punishment.

Jaggut. Are there any arguments, to annihilate their fantastical notions?

Syco. Oh! the best ones, Sir—The strong instinctive impulses of the five senses, the fascinating power of the fair sex, and the other enjoyments, are not human inventions; and since they are the works of God, whom they allow to be just and merciful, I do not think, that these temptations were created by Him as so many traps, merely to ensnare his poor creatures, in order that He may torment them afterwards in hell, and feast his divine eyes and ears with their misery and groans!

Jaggut. Surely, you have completely reasoned me out of my fears; (*to Buckshy*) what say you about these arguments, which seem to be unanswerable?

Buck. Why, Sir, Your Highness may, if You please, honour his frenzy with the name of arguments; but my humble opinion is, that the noble theme of future reward and punishment, for our good and bad deeds, is so clearly demonstrated, that it is too bright to be obscured by the gloom of sophistry; and the reasons upon which it is founded, are already sanctioned by divine injunctions—consequently, they are like so many immoveable rocks, which cannot be overturned by the hands of the children of ignorance. But be that as it may, my letter to *Holkar*

is finished ; will You be pleased to sign and seal it, Sir ?

Jaggut. Ay, give it to me, (*reads*) it is very well written ; (*signs, seals and returns it to Buckshy*), come, take it, and let it be despatched forthwith.

Buck. I will send it away immediately. (*Exit*)

Jaggut. Well, my friend, you see my *Buckshy* entirely differs from our opinion ; of course, he may view my present preparations of war in a different light from what we see them in.

Syco. Perhaps he may ; but what is it to us ? We must not lose sight of *Kishun Koovur*.

Jaggut. No, that we never shall ! (*Exeunt*)

SCENE III. A SPACIOUS HALL IN A BUNGALOW NEAR
THE FORT OF BHAMPOORA.

*Enter Jaswant Row Holkar, his Minister (a Brahmin), and
Ameerkhan his General.*

Holkar. In chimerical hopes of extirpating the English from Hindoostan, we have in vain exhausted all our resources, and strained every nerve, in this unhappy war with the English Government, and which at last has thus terminated in our disgrace and ruin, and left us the shameful experience of our folly, as well as their superiority over us, in every respect.

Ameer. Yes, but I am at a loss to account for the blindness of the divine decree, which has ordained, that these barbarians, the most detestable *Kuffers*, the wearers of hats, should become the Masters of Hindoostan.

Minister. It is the will of our Gods! And it has already been foretold in our *Puranas*, that this our holy land should be overrun by barbarians, of what description soever they may be, whether Musselmans, Europeans, or any other Foreigners. .

Ameer. Then you seem to make no distinction between true believers, and those the very meanest of the Nasaranies, the English? ha! ha! ha!

Minister. Oh, Sir, the distinction is too striking to escape even the eye of a superficial beholder; but it is unquestionably in favour of the English Nation.

Ameer. Then you will prefer the English Government to that of the Musselmans in this country, will you?

Minister. I do not understand you well, Sir; I think you would have me allow, that Musselmans had at one time discharged the duties of Government in this country; is that your meaning?

Ameer. My meaning! strange folly indeed. Is there any doubt that Musselmans have been in possession of Hindoostan for a long time?

Minister. Who is doubting of that? But, now I perceive our mistake: it lies in the meaning of

the term *Government*. If you suppose this word to be synonymous with brutish tyranny, our controversy is at an end ; because, I grant, the Moguls have tyrannized over us, for six or seven centuries, and treated us rather like slaves, than lawful subjects.

Ameer. Ha ! ha ! ha ! ha ! Pray, Sir, what is *your* definition then of the word *Government*.

Minister. *Government* is nothing else but the establishment of a legal authority, to make proper use of the united power of the whole society, in securing the reasonable liberty and privileges of every one of its members, and checking each individual from encroaching upon the rights of others, and thus preserving the community from mischiefs of every description.

Ameer. Keep your braminal subtilities to yourself ; mere play of words ! I have not philosophy enough to trouble my head about them. But, be that as it may, was not our Government very liberal, and consequently favourable to all classes of Hindoos ?

Minister. Yes, it was so, to those who had chosen abject slavery as the only means of preserving their lives and property ; but to all others it was rather a scourge than a Government, because nothing was safe under it. There is scarce any Town, Village, Pagoda, or any sacred place whatever, in Hindoostan, which does not exhibit some marks of your rapacity, depredations, and the violence of your religious bigotry.

Ameer. I know very well, that you idolaters always hate our pure religion : the English are not superstitious pagans like you, but we consider them infidels ; because, they brand our Prophet with the epithet of *Imposter*, and call their's the *Son of God*. However both of us, Christians and Mahomedans, being your natural enemies, what reason have you to prefer one to the other ?

Minister. My reasons are quite obvious ; in the first place, the Christian religion is as mild as that of the Brahmins ; they propagate it by gentle means of persuasion. The very suffering of their prophet corroborates fully their assurance, that divine blessings are not to be gained by slaughter and rapine, but by humility alone. And I need not say, that your religion owes its success to sword and fire.

Ameer. Pray, let me know, what you think about your own religion.

Minister. As to our religion, it is as old as the world itself ; and in consequence, I allow, it is full of absurd ceremonies, mysteries, and superstition ; but then it contains also the best precepts founded on solid virtue and wisdom.

Ameer. Ha ! ha ! ha ! Well, if so, does it not appear the work of the devil rather than the revelation from God ? because, you yourself allow, that it is full of superstitions and absurdities ; dont you ?

Minister. Yes, I do ; but shew me, if there is any religion, which is destitute of superstition of one kind

or other ; because I know, the emissaries of the devil, who are as busy in India as in Arabia, and who always become the commentators of many of the abstruse and ambiguous passages of the sacred books, convert many to their own fraternity, and thus make use of the same divine instrument, to corrupt mankind. This instance is fully corroborated every where, by the formation of many divisions among the followers of the same religion. But be that as it may, shew me if you can, whether there be any such mild and just government as that of the English, wherein the rights and liberties of the subject are so much respected, and all religions not only tolerated, but even encouraged in a great degree ?

Ameer. This shameful tameness of the cowardly race of the Hindoos has rendered them slaves to all the invaders. (*to Holkar*) Is not Your defeat owing to the cowardice of Your courtiers, who do not hesitate to praise our foe, even in Your presence ?

Minister. Oh ! not in the least, Sir ; we have done all that was practicable in the war against the English ; but it is true as our Maha Rajah observed, that we are at last fully convinced of our inferiority to them in wisdom and courage ; and I dare say, all these disasters are the fruits of your rashness in undervaluing the merits of the great English nation.

Holkar. (*interrupts them*) These foolish controversies are of no avail. (*to Ameer*) I would have you march at the head of part of the army, with all

possible expedition to Jaipoor, to assist *Jaggut Sing*, who has applied for my aid in the war, which he has lately declared against his rival *Maun Sing*.

Ameer. I will lose no time in obeying Your commands. *(Exit)*

Holkar. *(to the Minister)* I employ these Patans on account of their bravery ; but as to their religion and government, they are by no means favourable to any other nation but their own. But our prudence requires, that we should not attempt to interfere with or oppose their strong rooted prejudices. Mind that !
(Exeunt)

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I. A ROYAL PAVILION PITCHED ON A PLAIN ;
AN IVORY THRONE IN THE MIDDLE OF IT, WITH
SEVERAL CHAIRS AROUND ; A DISTANT VIEW
OF A RIVER AND HILLS.

Enter Jaggut Sing and sits down on the Throne.

Indeed ! this is a very critical juncture. I have already taken the field in person ; *Ameerkhan*, though hourly expected, is not yet arrived ; shall I hazard the battle with my own troops alone, unassisted ? No ! It would be a rash step surely ; but here comes my *Buckshy* ; I know he has a very wise head, though his

prudence makes him now and then a little too slow in his proceedings.

Enter Buckshy.

Buckshy. God be praised ! I came to inform You, that *Ameerkhan* is just arrived with his head quarters, and is ready to wait upon Your Highness ; shall I bring him in ?

Jaggut. Bring him, to be sure ; I am all impatience to see him.

Buckshy. Very well, Sir. (*Goes and returns with Ameerkhan, who salutes the Rajah with salams, presents him with eleven mohurs, and stands before him with profound respect and down cast eyes*).

Jaggut. (*Returns his salam, and permits him to sit down on a chair at his right side*). How is your health, Sir ? You seem fatigued by your forced marches from Bhampoora.

Ameer. I am quite well, and ready to Your service ; my fatigue is nothing, when I consider the noble errand of coming here, to have the honor of paying my homage personally at Your feet, and of serving Your Highness in the cause, which I know is just.

Jaggut. Are you then convinced of the propriety of my claim to the hand of *Kishun Koovur*, and of the necessity of my taking hostile measures against *Maun Sing*, my rival ?

Ameer. Ay, perfectly well, Sir; her father was very right in chusing You for his son-in-law; who can doubt the right of a father to dispose of his daughter?

Jaggut. Though you are a Musselman, you seem to have a competent knowledge of our laws.

Ameer. Ay, Hindoostan being my native country, I am in some degree acquainted with your customs and manners, and I cannot help admiring your shasters, for the beauty of their wise precepts, which I dare say, are quite similar to the divine injunctions of our holy Alcoran.

Jaggut. Your wisdom is proportionate to the reputation, which you have justly acquired by your splendid exploits in Hindoostan; but now go and take rest. I have already preconcerted the plan of attack; let us commence it tomorrow at a convenient hour. Here, receive this from me, as a token of my particular regard for you. (*presents him with Khillat and Jewels.*)

Ameer. I cannot be sufficiently thankful for this kindness (*receives the Khillat with a good grace*). I will order my troops to be in readiness: Your Highness may dispose of Your servant in any way You please. (*Exit*)

Jaggut. Well, *Buckshy*, this brave Patan Chief is very polite; and seems to be sincerely determined to afford me every assistance in his power.

Buck. I hope he will be what he appears to be;

but deeds rather than words are the best proofs of one's sincerity.

Jaggut. To be sure they are ; but what private information have you received from the camp of *Maun Sing*.

Buck. A very satisfactory one indeed : a spy tells me, that some of his Sirdars are dissatisfied, but the cause of it is not well known.

Jaggut. What was the result of the skirmish, which our advanced guard has had with one of their foraging parties.

Buck. It was entirely in our favour, Sir ; some prisoners, who were taken in this affair, assure me, that their army, being divided in parties and factions, is not in a condition to fight.

Jaggut. It is very lucky ; let us make haste then, to take advantage of this circumstance, and attack them at once with our united forces.

Buck. Ay, that is the best plan : but *Ameerkhan* being a Mussehnan, and a soldier of fortune by rank, enterprizing, unsteady, and subtle, he can assume any character, and put it off at pleasure ; therefore, I would have Your Highness be upon Your guard, that it may not be in his power to abuse Your confidence.

Jaggut. Oh ! there is no fear of that ; he can have no other object in view but our interest ; let us proceed to operations. (*Exeunt*)

SCENE II. A GREEN VELVET TENT.

Enter Maun Sing, pensive.

Alas! I am very unfortunate! What is to be done now? Both *Bapoojee Sindia*, and *Surja Row Ghatakay*, who are sent by *Sindia* to assist me, are actually ravaging my country! The disgraceful defeat of this day is certainly owing to the disloyalty of some of my Sirdars, who are ill-advised by this scoundrel, my Dewan, *Savoi Sing*. But here he comes.

Enter Savoi Sing.

Savoi. My duty obliges me to inform you sincerely, that our entire overthrow is inevitable; the Sirdars will not do their duty punctually, unless they behold their lawful sovereign *Dhokul Sing* on the Musnud; my persuading and exhorting them, in your behalf, is of no avail.

Maun. Ay, on my behalf? A monstrous lie! I know, you have made use of your persuasions and exhortations, but in a quite different way.

Savoi. (aside) He seems to have smelled the rat; no matter, he is entirely ensnared—I may bring him to any terms I like. *(to Maun Sing)* I do not understand you well, Sir.

Maun. Don't understand me? So much the better; but do you know whom you are speaking to?

Savoi. Ay, perfectly well; to the usurper of Joud-poor; your menacing looks and your authoritative tone

will not avail you any thing ; I will henceforward consider myself to be my own master, and will do my duty to my king and country, according to the dictates of my own conscience. (*Exit ; meets the Moonshee and addresses him*) Will you walk with me to my tent, Moonshee ?

Moon. Ay, with all my heart ; any news, Sir ?

Savoi. A very pleasant one ; *Maun Sing* shall soon meet the fate which he deserves : many of our Sirdars are ready to assist me in my designs against him. *Ameerkhan* is to join our party, I will raise *Dhokul Sing* to the Throne without any delay ; thus you see my triumph is complete. These are the glorious deeds, which I have premeditated, and which my head has achieved within a very short time.

Moon. Ay, very true ; but—

Savoi. There is no need of your Buts, you know.

Moon. I know, Sir ; but, what do you expect from all these your achievements ?

Savoi. Why, *Dhokul Sing* shall have the name, and I the power of the Rajah ; do you understand ?

Moon. Yes, I do ; your proficiency in the Science of Politics is admirable, indeed ; but have a care, lest the indiscreet practice of it cost you your life, as it has done to many of its professors.

Savoi. Don't fear, I have enough of prudence : I am guided by it like yourself in every circumstance ;

but *you* suffer timidity to pass for that virtue, which *I* would not. The difference between you and me is that, which consists between the timid and the brave. (*Exeunt*)

Maun Sing alone in his Tent..

Yes, my misfortune is complete ; I have now two formidable enemies to contend with : *Savoi Sing* at home, and *Jaggut Sing* abroad ! But here comes my brave General, who is my only confident now.

Enter General.

General. We are undone ! another attack, which is very likely to be made by the enemy, will certainly decide our fate. The whole of our artillery and ammunition fell into the hands of the enemy—if we do not reach soon our Capital, all of us will be taken prisoners, and perhaps fall a sacrifice to the rage of *Savoi Sing*, who bestirs himself with great diligence, and rides from tent to tent, in order to execute his black designs against Your Highness.

Maun. (*after a long pause*) What has become of my private letter to *Ameerkhan*, which you have already sent him by your confidential servant ? Can he be gained over from our enemies ?

General. I have just received a very favourable intimation on that subject ; this private intercourse will I hope, be of very great use to us ; but I will tell You all, after our safe arrival at Joudpoor ; now

let us fly from this dangerous situation, and make the best of our way to the Capital.

Maun. If we must, we must ; come, then, let us escape with those few faithful troops of our household.
(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE III. AN OLD CHOULTRY ON THE BANK OF A
LARGE TANK, NEAR A VILLAGE.

Enter Jaggut Sing and his Sycophant.

Jaggut. God be praised ! I have gained a signal victory over my enemy ; his army is completely routed ; *Maun Sing*, with the remainder of his troops, has shut himself up in the Fort of Joudpoor, which he will be obliged to surrender at last.

Syco. This event I had already anticipated. The beautiful *Kishan Koorur* shall be Your's, because Heaven is always just, in rewarding merit. Did not I urge, the other day, the necessity of undertaking war, on this score ?

Jaggut. Yes, but the over-cautious policy of my *Buckshy* would not easily yield to our preconcerted measure.

Syco. Thus, the excess of prudence, as I have very often told You, prevents people from taking advantage of the favourable circumstances, which present themselves ; but, here he comes, let us drop the subject.

Enter Buckshy in great agitation.

Jaggut. You seem to be almost breathless! Pray, what is the matter? What has happened to you?

Buck. The worst, Sir, not to me alone, but to Your Highness, and to the kingdom of Jaipoor.

Jaggut. Why, in the name of wonder, what do you mean?

Buck. We are betrayed, undone, ruined! What I had anticipated is come to pass at last. *Ameerkhan*, by the instigation of *Maun Sing*, is now become our open enemy. He, in conjunction with some Sirdars of Joudpoor, has already defeated several divisions of our army, and taken from them all the ordnance and other trophies, which we have lately captured, and has restored them to our enemy.

Jaggut. This is most unfortunate indeed! But what inducements had he for doing so?

Buck. None, that I can see, Sir; but, under pretence of want of provisions, a party of his lawless Patans were pillaging one of our fertile districts; and the troops that were stationed there, were obliged to drive them out of it by force of arms. This unforeseen circumstance is said to have exasperated this unprincipled Musselman chief; but the fact is, that a private understanding exists between him and *Maun Sing*.

Jaggut. Oh! this my disaster is too heavy to be borne! What to do, I know not!

Buck. I think it advisable, that we should decamp immediately, and march straight to our Capital, which will undoubtedly be ransacked, should we not reach it in proper time.

Jaggut. Thus, our triumph is changed into disgrace. !

Syco. Ay, thus the wheel of fortune, which already lifted us to the sky, has brought us to the ground by one single rotation.

Jaggut. Really, I now think, we mortals are doomed to suffer all sorts of reverses.

Syco. Nay, many disappointments, crosses and privations of all descriptions.

Jaggut. Ah ! what are our conjectures, discussions and debates about the probabilities of the future ? Nothing but the prattling of children.

Syco. Ay, rather the chirping of birds ; or, if You please, the howling of jackalls, and barking of dogs.

Jaggut. My motives and reasons for undertaking this war, were just.

Syco. So they were, but the result of it—

Buck. Clearly points out, that our motives were wrong, and our reasons erroneous. (*aside*) The tongue of the Sycophant forms an admirable echo, to confirm our poor prince in his delusion. (*to the Rajah aloud*) But we have no time to lose, let us hasten to Jaipoor.

Jaggut. Wait here a little while ; I will go and give the necessary orders for the despatch of my *Zenanah*. I will be back presently. (*Exit*)

Buck. Is it not extraordinary, that barefaced flattery, consisting of downright falsehood and absurdity, should pass for sincerity with Princes ?

Syco. Ay, it is from this circumstance alone, that this great art has become a sort of current coin in all Durbars ; and I think, it is chiefly upon this that the safety and success of the courtier depend.

Buck. How ? shew me ; where is your safety, if the Rajah should recollect what you have asserted before, and then compare it with what you have said afterwards, upon the same subject ?

Syco. There is no fear of that ; because, from time immemorial up to this present moment, Princes are uniformly the same inconsiderate beings ; and of course, the success of our profession depends partly upon their forgetfulness, and partly upon their humour, which requires to be tickled always by sweet words.

Buck. Well, then, if deluding credulous Princes, and thereby ruining the community, and of consequence, sinning against God, are the advantages, which are to be reaped from this art, I detest it as a diabolical vice, or as a kind of sweet poison ; but I wish you will henceforward mend your conduct ; will you ?

Syco. No, you cannot reason me out of the course, which I pursue entirely for the sake of my self-interest. I acquire the same fortune, and influence by my adulations, fawning, and cringing, which you do by your rigid philosophy and virtuous career; but the difference is, that my way is short, easy and pleasant; whereas your's is long, difficult and dangerous: do you know?

Buck. Yes, perfectly. (*aside*) These fellows, have no principles; of course, they will always cling to their vices, because they find their profit by it. (*aloud*) But here comes the Rajah.

Enter Jaggut Sing.

Jaggut. Buckshy, order my tents to be struck, let the cavalry proceed before, and as to my bodyguard, let it march with my Palanqueen. Are your followers and Palanqueen ready? I would have you command my rear guard which shall consist of my infantry. (*to Sycophant*) Make haste, will you? Mount your horse, and come along with me, that we may converse together on our way. (*Exeunt*)

SCENE IV. A ROOM IN A COUNTRY HOUSE, POORLY FURNISHED, WITH A SMALL GARDEN IN THE FRONT.

Enter Savoi Sing dejected.

My hopes are frustrated! *Amecrkhan* has changed sides! He has defeated *Jaggut Sing's* army, in conse-

quence of which the revolted Sirdars, on whom I relied for succour, have joined the standard of *Maun Sing*! What is to be done now? But, here comes the *Moonshee*, he may perhaps be of some use to me.

Enter Moonshee with a melancholy air.

Savoi. *Moonshee*, the smiles of fortune in our favour are at an end; our affairs, you know, have begun, all of a sudden, to wear a gloomy aspect; these are the works of our unpropitious stars.

Moon. Nay, I say, these are the evils, produced by your intriguing head, which I know is now as empty as an exhausted receiver of the air-pump; because, you have already drained it of all its contents, in these your glorious achievements.

Savoi. Your ill-timed raillery is as insupportable as the sensation, which is felt when the wound is touched by a firebrand.

Moon. Yes, I know; your disappointment and guilty conscience makes your grief more poignant.

Savoi. Ay, but my motives were just in this affair, you know!

Moon. They may have been so; but your deeds were not.

Savoi. How so?

Moon. Why, a moment's retrospection of your past treacherous conduct will convince you fully, that you were hurried on by blind ambition, and that you have disregarded the dictates of your conscience.

Saroi. Ah! what is the use of our ruminating thus on what is past? Let us now consider, whether it is entirely impossible to secure the rights of the Prince.

Moon. Nay, let us rather consider, whether we can secure your natural right to your own head; do you understand me?

Saroi. Not quite clearly: am I now exposed to any immediate danger?

Moon. Ay, to an imminent one, Sir; you must be well aware, that *Maun Sing*, being freed from all his dangers from abroad, will not fail to employ all his resources for the extinction of your life, which alone he thinks is wanting to consummate his worldly bliss.

Saroi. How came you to think thus?

Moon. It is not guessing, Sir, but I have been well informed that *Maun Sing* is actually concerting a plan to attain this object, which he has always in view, through the instrumentality of *Amcerkhan*; who, I doubt not, will forward all his designs with great readiness.

Saroi. If so, I am undone; whether I may strive to better my condition by residing here, or whether it will be prudent to save my life by flight, I am at a loss to determine.

Moon. I think, the second method is preferable, because of its practicability in this critical juncture.

Saroi. It is a very disagreeable alternative, indeed.

Moon. But, it is become a necessary one, on account of many untoward circumstances of your own creating.

Saroi. Ay, but what will people say about me, when they come to know, that I am obliged to run away to save my life?

Moon. Why, they will be very glad to honor you with the title of an impudent adventurer, a villain, a scoundrel, or at least, that of a stupid blockhead.

Saroi. Shame! Put, suppose I should have succeeded in my undertakings?

Moon. Then, you would have been considered as a skilful System-monger, a famous Rajah-maker, an able Politician, or the most capital Statesman the world ever has produced.

Saroi. Then according to your maxim, how bad soever the character of a man may be, his riches, his influence, and after all, his success in the affairs of the world, (no matter, whether he owes it to just or fraudulent means, or to mere chance) will infallibly raise him to the highest pitch of esteem among mankind; will it not?

Moon. Yes, it will; but the thinking part of mankind will expose to the world the bad motives of the successful wicked man.

Saroi. But the thinking part is very small in comparison with the great mass of unthinking people.

Moon. You are in the right: it is undoubtedly;

but this inequality in numbers seems to be sanctioned by divine wisdom for some good end.

Savoi. Then, my mistake lies in being dazzled by the esteem of the greater number, and proceeding to gain it by the meanest artifices ; does it not ?

Moon. Ay, it does ; but, I wish you had made this seasonable conclusion before you had brought the matter to this crisis ; but, then, yur spirits were in continual ferment, occasioned by your violent thirst for power.

Savoi. Alas ! what is past, is past : shall I flee to the city of Nagore for refuge ?

Moon. Ay, that Fort I think, is the best shelter for you, because it is beyond the reach of your foes.

Savoi. Will you be so kind as to follow me thither ?

Moon. No, I beg your pardon. Being a man of a great family, and in the service of *Mawn Sing*, my duty as well as prudence does not permit me to involve myself in your misfortunes.

Savoi. Well, will you permit me, then, to proceed to Nagore ?

Moon. Ay, with all my heart, make haste, I wish you success, and request you will henceforward abstain from the course you have hitherto pursued, and tread in the safe path of virtue. So may God be with you.

Savoi. Thanks for your good wishes ; So good bye.
(*Exeunt severally*)

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I. A SALOON IN THE PALACE OF JOUDPOOR.

TIME, EVENING.

Enter Maun Sing and his General.

Maun. Praise to God! *Jaggut Sing* is completely defeated, and driven back to Jaipoor; but still the work is only half done, because I have yet much to dread from the machination of *Savoi Sing*: have you communicated my designs to *Ameer Khan*.

Gen. Yes, Sir; I have assured him of Your heartfelt gratitude for the services, he has rendered this Durbar, adding also that Your success in this case cannot be complete, unless You get rid of *Savoi Sing* and his party; and in consequence, that You will be much obliged, if he will seize and deliver them into Your hands by any means whatever.

Maun. And what did he say to that?

Gen. He hesitated for some time to give me any satisfactory answer, as is always the case with him, when pecuniary emoluments are not offered to him in a distinct manner; and then I gave in his hands Your written agreement, which he read over and over again, with great attention, seemed to be quite pleased and said with a smile, that he would undertake the difficult task of apprehending *Savoi Sing* within a very short period.

Maun. Do you know what that agreement contains?

Gen. Perfectly well, Sir, You have offered him the sum of two lacks of sicca rupees, and a fine Jahgeer in to the bargain, if he would undertake the seizure of *Savoi Sing*. Is it not?

Maun. Ay, that is it; but what think you about the propriety of this scheme?

Gen. Surely, it is the best that can be devised; because, the ruin of our implacable enemy is our only safety, and the thing we must chiefly aim at, cost what it will.

Maun. The people will perhaps complain against me for being so lavish of the public property.

Gen. Oh, no; perhaps those, who are regardless of Your Highness' happiness, may murmur a little, but it is of no consequence; because, You know the people are no more than slaves of the king; *he* is the sole proprietor of their lives, honour, and property; this I know is the law sanctioned by divine injunctions.

Maun. Ay, you are the only man, that is sincerely attached to me; and since the plan has met with your approbation, I care not about the murmurings of the people. But pray, do you know, where *Savoi Sing* is now?

Gen. Yes, Sir, it was reported by my spies last night, that he fled to Nagore with a few of his wretched adherents.

Maun. Oh, did he escape then?

Gen. No matter: *Ameerkhan* will pursue him wherever he goes, and effect his seizure at all events; because this Musselman's expertness and ingenuity in these matters are so amazing, and his endowments, both bodily and mental, so wonderful, that they almost approach to magical power.

Maun. *Savoi*, quite elated with the smiles of deceitful fortune, almost fancied himself amongst the Gods; but now he is no more than a poor fugitive in the fortress of Nagore.

Gen. Yes, what else can he expect when he has entirely forgotten his duty towards his king, who according to our shasters, is God upon earth?

Maun. Your extensive knowledge can not sufficiently be admired, but it is growing rather late; let us break off our conference. Tomorrow you go to *Ameerkhan*, and ascertain from him, what measures, he intends to take in order to apprehend *Savoi Sing*.

(*Exeunt*)

SCENE II. A PARLOUR IN A BUNGALOW, SITUATED IN
AN EXTENSIVE GARDEN, IN THE VICINITY OF
JODDPOOR.

Enter Ameerkhan, attentively looking at his Watch.

It is past nine: I must reach Nagore as soon as possible: the Rajah is very liberal; he promises me *Jahgeer*, besides two lacks of rupees; surely, it is a

very good bargain; but how can I execute his commission? By open force against the Fort of Nagore? No! That is impossible; but, here comes my confidential Jemadar.

Enter Jemadar.

Jem. In obedience to your commands, I have given the necessary orders to our troops, to be in readiness to march to Nagore, shall we have any occasion for some field pieces?

Ameer. To be sure, we shall let them go before, with my advanced guard.

Jem. But pray, Sir, may I take the liberty of asking you, what is your errand?

Ameer. Oh! it is nothing else, but to seize *Savoi Sing*, who is said to have taken shelter in that Fort, with a few of his followers.

Jem. Is it that? Then the task is not so easy as you perhaps suppose it to be; because, I know, this brave Rajpoot chief possesses there resources enough, to defend himself against our army; and I know the Rajpoots of that place will protect the refugees with all their might.

Ameer. True, but you must know likewise, that *Ameerkhan* will not undertake any errand, to execute which he has not previously devised the necessary means.

Jem. I suppose, you will have recourse to some artifice in this case, as you have done upon many other occasions.

Ameer. Ay, that is my way.

Jem. But you are mistaken in this matter; because *Savoi Sing* is so well versed in artifices and intrigues, that it is next to impossible to out-do him in that point.

Ameer. But where is the glory of genius to be found, except in out-witting those, who are supposed to be invincible by their skill.

Jem. Yes, thus the English are great, because they always out-manœuvre their formidable opponents.

Ameer. No doubt, you have hit the mark. I assure you that my intellects are so replete with plans and stratagems, both offensive and defensive, that I flatter myself, I can prove to be an over-match to any power in India.

Jem. Yes, you can; you know it was already predicted by a sage Faqueer that you would at one time have the supreme dominion over India; therefore, why don't you seat yourself at once on the throne of Delhi, and restore to the true believers their fallen power and glory in Hindoostan? This project, though seemingly rash, is by no means impracticable; because the Cabinets of *Scindia*, *Holkar*, *Bhonslah*, *Peishwa*, *Nizam* and other Potentates are at present so cor-

rupted, and their strength is so reduced, that no resistance whatever is to be expected from those quarters.

Ameer. Ay, I have this grand object always in my view, and I know likewise how to take the advantage of the present favourable circumstances to put it in execution; but the rising English authority in India will not suffer me or any other adventurer to reach that highest pinnacle of glory; and as to their power, both by land and sea I think it is quite miraculous, and is now-a-days capable of performing wonders in the world.

Jem. Surely, your wisdom is unfathomable. I am now fully convinced of the truth of your arguments, but here comes *Maun Sing's* General.

Enter General with a cheerful countenance.

Gen. His Highness has directed me to convey to you his most sincere thanks for your ready compliance with his request, and wishes that you will let him know the method of your proceeding in this intricate affair.

Ameer. Well, then, tell His Highness, I have a thousand methods before me; let him not be troubled about it, and let him expect the head of *Saroi* as a present from me within a few days. Do you understand me?

Gen. Quite clearly. I assure you, Sir, your success in this case will restore everlasting peace to our

country; and it is upon that alone that the Rajah's prosperity depends.

Ameer. Well, then, tell the Rajah, I will leave this immediately for Nagore, and play my part so skillfully, that it shall shine in the theatre of the world as a master-piece of the kind.

Gen. I will inform His Highness of that: so I wish you prosperity and success! (*Exit*)

Jem. Every thing is ready, shall I order the Patan corps and battalions to march? (*Exeunt*)

Ameer. Certainly! let us move on!

SCENE III. A TENT, STRONGLY GUARDED BY ARMED

PEONS IN A MANGO GARDEN, NEAR THE

FORT OF NAGORE.

Enter Savoi Sing.

A strange circumstance indeed! But how can this be accounted for, or relied upon? *Ameerkhan* gives out, that he is disgusted with the ingratitude of *Mann Sing*, and now invites me to his camp, in order, as he says, to tell me some secrets verbally! But as my prudence would not allow me to trust him, I have politely declined his invitation. It seems, however, he wishes to have me in his hands, as an instrument to ruin *Mann Sing*. Why, really, this is a lucky incident! God grant, that my suppositions may prove true! But will *Ameerkhan* be sincere, or act

traitor in this case? I cannot say one or the other, because, he has already sent me word that he will wait upon me today with a few servants only. Well, if he will be so good as his word, his trust in me is not to be doubted. For then, how can I suspect him of any treacherous designs against me?

Enter Servant.

Ser. *Ameerkhan* is approaching our Garden, Sir.

Savoi. Does he? What retinue has he along with him?

Ser. No retinue, he only comes in his Palanquin, with three or four kidmutgars, and a single horseman who seems to be his favourite *Jemadar*.

Savoi. (*aside*) Then he confides in me entirely! (*to the servant*) Very well, let him enter unmolested.

Ser. I will convey your orders to our guards.

(*Exit*)

Savoi. What can all this mean? Can so much of apparent confidence be an artifice? By no means; it is more than probable, that he is dissatisfied with the bad conduct of *Maun Sing*, and of course, would needs have my assistance, in his operations against him; because according to the common course of things, both the friends of our friends, the enemies of our enemies, are our friends, and the friends of our enemies, and the enemies of our friends are our foes. But here he comes unarmed, with a smiling countenance, full of serenity, and seeming innocence.

Enter Ameerkhan and his Jemadar, both saluting Savoi Sing with a good grace, and sitting down before him on the carpet.

Ameer. Well, *Savoi Sing*, I am very sorry, to see you in this condition!

Savoi. I thank you for your good will towards me; but you need not wonder at this miserable condition of a wretched fugitive, whom fortune persecutes without mercy.

Ameer. Pshaw! Do not be hopeless; God will at last display his mercy towards his helpless creatures.

Savoi. No doubt! He did display it already, Sir, by exciting in your heart some pity for my deplorable and forlorn condition.

Ameer. But, pray, Sir, I beg your pardon, what made you hesitate at first, and then refuse to come? I fear, you doubt my veracity.

Savoi. Oh, no, Sir! The violent agitations, which these reverses have produced in my mind, force me even to doubt of my own existence.

Ameer. Ay, do they? Then I was in the wrong to believe, that nothing in the world could deprive *Savoi Sing* of his innate courage.

Savoi. No, Sir; Courage has not forsaken me, but the comparison of the past with the present circumstances has —

Ameer. (*interrupting him*) Changed your sex, I think; ha! ha! ha! ha! But that comparison alone is enough to convince you of the sincerity of my motives; because *Maun Sing* was my pretended friend, and now he is my open enemy, by his ungrateful behaviour towards me. And why do you not compare these circumstances one with the other, and conclude thereby, that I am really in want of your friendship and assistance?

Savoi. Ay, you may be, Sir, but—

Ameer. There again you stick to your Buts. (*to Jemadar*) Why, I cannot reason him out of his womanish fears.

Jem. Can't you, Sir! then I will do it for you, and will very easily laugh him out of his unaccountable doubts. (*to Savoi*) It is very true, Sir, that you are at loss to account for this change in our conduct towards *Maun Sing*, after what has actually taken place; but this instance is not so uncommon under the Moon, because the same person may either be our friend or foe, according to circumstances, you know.

Savoi. Yes; but it is this point of your argument alone, which does not permit me to be so bold as to trust myself implicitly into your hands; because outward appearances are not to be considered as a conclusive testimony of inward motives.

Jem. Very true; but are deeds too to be viewed in the same light?

Savoi. Oh, no, never ; because if this were the case, we should have nothing to depend upon in this world, and consequently no data to proceed upon in the ordinary affairs of this life.

Jem. Well, then, you see my master is already come here, without any guards whatever ; does he not in this case trust entirely upon your friendship and good will ? And now, is not his sincerity towards you clearly demonstrated by these deeds ?

Savoi. To be sure, it is ; but the disturbed state of my mind requires one thing more, to support my belief.

Jem. Still something more ? ha ! ha ! ha ! Pray, what is it, Sir ?

Savoi. Nothing extraordinary ; but I beg your master will be so good as to take an oath, and declare solemnly before any sacred shrine, that he has no bad intentions against me.

Ameer. Ha ! ha ! ha ! ha ! The most wonderful pusillanimity, that I ever saw in my life. (*to Savoi*) Since I cannot satisfy you in any other way, I am ready to perform what you require ; come, then, shall we go to the neighbouring Durga ?

Savoi. Ay, let us go !

Jem. Ha ! ha ! ha ! ha ! This is a very remarkable instance of Hindoo cowardice : but, let us repair to the holy Tomb.
(*Exeunt*)

SCENE CHANGES TO A MAGNIFICENT TOMB OF A
MAHOMEDAN SAINT.

Enter Savoi Sing, Ameerkhan, and Jemadar.

Ameer. The noble appearance of this sacred building fills the mind at once with awe and reverence ; does it not ?

Jem. It does ; but I think these unbelievers, the Hindoos, are utter strangers to these enthusiastic emotions ; because, their knowledge of the Supreme Being and his attributes is very imperfect, when compared to the sublime notions, which we Musselmans have of the great Allah.

Ameer. Well, *Savoi Sing*, I believe you are displeased with what our Jemadar has just now suggested about the Hindoos.

Savoi. Oh, no, not in the least, Sir ; I am rather amused with his assertions, because the ideas of Mahometans concerning our nation, and their bold and erroneous statements are become so proverbially ridiculous, that they never fail to produce laughter among us.

Jem. Surely it will continue to produce it, until all infidels are corrected by subversion and conversion ; ha ! ha ! ha !

Savoi. That is to say, they will cease to be Hindoos, after they are corrupted irrecoverably ; ha ! ha ! ha !

Ameer. *Jemadar* I assure you, *Savoi Sing* has combated your reasons very ably ; what think you about his head ?

Jem. Why, Sir, I think it is quite full of wit and wisdom ; and I hope you will derive many advantages from it.

Ameer. To be sure, I will. I know, it can do miracles ; and, therefore, I consider his friendship as the most valuable acquisition in the world.

Jem. You are in the right, Sir. (*aside*) Surely, two lacks of rupees and a Jahgeer is no small acquisition !

Savoi. (*to Ameerkhan*) You do me too much honour by thus overvaluing my merits ; and I am determined to shew gratitude rather by my deeds than barely expressing it by words.

Ameer. Very good ! Since that is your determination, I will shew you just now by my formal oaths, how sincere I am in my intentions towards you. (*to Jemadar*) Can you get me the holy Alcoran ?

Jem. Yes ; here is one, which I have already procured from one of the attendants of this holy place. (*gives it into his hand*).

Ameer. (*receives the Alcoran with an affected humility and devotion*) “ I do declare solemnly, and “ swear by all that is sacred, that I have no bad designs whatever against Savoi Sing. I shall be his “ sincere friend henceforward ; let God and his divine agent upon the earth, the great Mahomet, be witnesses of my sincerity ” (*keeps the Alcoran upon his head, and returns it to the Jemadar after kissing it*

several times) Now, *Savoi Sing*, I have done what you have required of me; are there still some suspicions lurking in the gloomy corners of your heart?

Savoi. Oh! God forbid, that I should be so blind, as not to be able to see the bright sun in the sky. I am perfectly convinced of your sincerity. I will with all my heart wait upon you tomorrow at your Camp, and I request, you will excuse my indelicacy in having required an oath from you.

Ameer. Pshaw! According to the common course of things, any man in your strange predicament will be under the necessity of requiring it; no matter, if you will be pleased to honour me with your visit at any convenient time, I will receive you with all the military honours due to your high rank; and I assure you again, that if you will depend upon me faithfully, I will prove myself to be the best of friends?

Savoi. I thank you, Sir.

Jem. (to Ameerkhan) Depend upon it, his wise head will be more useful to you than many empty ones like that of mine! Do you understand me Sir?

Ameer. Ay, very clearly; you mean his wise counsels will be of great service to me, is it not?

Jem. Ay, that is my meaning: you always hit the mark without missing.

Ameer. Well, Jemadar, we have attained the object we had in view; and now, let us return to our tents, and make necessary preparations for the re-

ception of our friend, *Savoi Sing*. (*both saluting Savoi Sing*).
(*Exeunt*)

Savoi, (*alone*).

Ameerkhan is undoubtedly mine! Now I will teach *Maun Sing*, how to hate me! I will let him feel the marvelous power of my head; to be sure I will. Ay, the poor fellow may perhaps repent, but what is that to me? I will not pardon him, no, never!
(*Exit*)

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I. A VERY LARGE TENT, PITCHED IN THE CAMP OF AMEERKHAN, THE REGULAR INFANTRY THREE DEEP DRAWN UP AROUND IT, WITH SEVERAL FIELD PIECES MOUNTED AND LOADED, THE MATCHES LIGHTED, LINES OF PATAN CAVALRY ARE SEEN RANGED IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS.

Enter Savoi Sing and his officers, with several relations and followers, conducted by the Jemadar of Ameerkhan.

Savoi. Is not the weather this morning warmer than usual, Jemadar?

Jem. Ay, it is very sultry, surely; but when the sun approaches to his meridian glory, you shall find, that the heat of this place will be as intense as that of an oven.

Savoi. I am quite transported with joy, at being received with such particular marks of distinction and honour !

Jem. Very true ; my master has ordered the whole body of his troops to be under arms, in order to salute you, on your coming to and going from our Camp ; because, he thinks it necessary, that his great regard for you be known to the public.

Savoi. I am all gratitude for his kindness ; but where is your master ? I am very eager to embrace him soon.

Jem. In obedience to his commands, I came to receive you at some distance from the Camp, and thence to conduct you to this pavilion. I think, he is busy in his sleeping tent, in selecting some valuable jewels, and some delicious fruits, such as grapes, oranges, and figs of the best quality, which I know, he intends to welcome you with. (*aside*) I mean grape shots, cannon balls, and musket bullets. (*to Savoi*) But as it is already late, I will go and call him. (*Exit*)

Savoi. (*to one of his officers*) Let us rejoice, and thank heaven for this happy change of our fortune. We had been nearly reduced to the most miserable condition, by the machination of our enemy ; but now, the very person, whom *Maun Sing* employed in ruining me, is become the very instrument in my hands for his destruction ; such are the miracles,

which heaven works in favour of its favourites. Does it not ?

Off. Yes, Sir, it sometime does ; but a sudden change, like this, is a very extraordinary phenomenon, and must have some mystery in it.

Savoi. Some mystery, to be sure, there is ; yet what else can it be, but a divine miracle in our favour, as I have just observed ?

Off. Yes ; but is it necessary, that such a large body of troops should be arranged in battle array, merely to salute us ?

Savoi. Vain suspicions ! Did not the Jemadar tell us just now, that his master intends to convince the populace of his great regard for me, by thus treating me with pomp and honour ? Well, don't you see, that I am already treated like a Prince ?

Off. True ; but why should there be so many guns planted in every direction around ? I shudder at the very sight of the lighted matches, and of the muzzles of the guns, which are all pointed at us. Are so many deadly implements of war requisite, merely to pay us compliments ?

Savoi. No, they are not ; but, who knows, it may be the intention of *Ameerkhan* to exhibit before me the show of a mock battle, which requires different manœuvres of troops, firing of guns, wheeling about of cavalry, and all that.

Off. Perhaps, it may be ; but what signifies this profound silence, which prevails every where ? And

why does no body stir around us? Is not this dismal appearance something like the dead calm, which, they say, precedes a storm at sea?

Savoi. Pshaw! *Ameerkhan* must have made these arrangements to shew me the regularity, and the strict discipline of his army.

Off. Be that as it may; why should we be thus deserted by all his people, and why should the Jemadar himself have left us alone in this large tent?

Savoi. Your remarks seem to have some truth in them: they begin to operate on my mind, though I am not certain of any thing at present; yet some secret unaccountable agitations of my heart make me uneasy, I feel a kind of chilling sensations throughout my body, my heart palpitates! What can all this mean?—Fy! Fy! It is nothing but a chimera; the doleful effects of unfounded fears, excited by your imaginary doubts, ha! ha! ha! ha! It is very true, that bewildered eyes see things in a different light from what they really are. Is it possible that *Ameerkhan* should be so base a perjurer, as to betray me, after taking an oath, before the Durga of his saint?

Off. No, it is impossible; but the strange coincidence of some circumstances has in a manner forced me to doubt the sincerity of this Musselman.

Savoi. Yes, that is the thing which disturbs the peace of my mind; it is very true. I attempt to banish these gloomy thoughts out of my head, but they

in spite of my efforts arise there spontaneously, and prey like vultures on my soul. Oh! what a miserable creature man is! Now I perceive, that this disquietude is the fruit of my unbounded ambition. Cursed be riches, and power! They fascinate us by their enchanting charms, then render us a burden to ourselves. What blockheads are we to pursue these phantoms in hopes of happiness? Oh! that I had been content with a moderate fortune!

Off. You are in the right, Sir; we pursue butterflies, with a view to build our castles in the air by their means.

Savoi. But, alas! what is the use of thus aggravating our sorrows, by ruminating on our past follies! Where is my body-guard?

Off. They are scattered about here and there. I think it would be proper to keep them collected in one place; but here comes the brother-in-law of *Ameerkhan*.

Enter Brother-in-law.

Savoi. I am very glad to see you, Sir; but where is *Ameerkhan*? Why does he delay to honour us with his company?

Broth. I don't know, why? I came here of my own accord to be present at this interview; perhaps, he is busy in his tent; but, I think he will be here presently.

Off. You think, there is no sinister intention ? But oh ! what is the matter ? The tent is in a violent motion ! It almost totters : there is no wind at all ! Is it the shock of an earthquake ? No ; the ground is firm enough. But mercy upon us : here it falls down. It is a plot ! We are undone ! It is a plot. (*The tent falls down on the head of Savoi Sing, his Officers, relations, and servants ; drums begin to beat, musketry commences a heavy and brisk fire upon the tent ; the field-pieces pour in their fiery hail of grapes from all directions ; columns of thick smoke and dust rise and spread on all sides, and cover the whole plain with terrible darkness. Within the tent are heard hideous cries, loud lamentations, screams of agony, and dreadful shrieks of dying sufferers.*)

Oh ! We are murdered ! butchered ! massacred ! *Ameerkhan*, that scoundrel, that rascal, that monster, has deceived us !—Oh God ! Mercy ! Mercy !—How to extricate ourselves from under this weight ?—Alas ! We are fired upon ! No safety ! Help ! Help ! Who are you ?—I am the wretch, *Savoi*, wounded, exhausted, here I sink ! Adieu to the world !—Alas, I am the brother-in-law of *Ameerkhan* ! Oh, what is this ? What have I done ? Why do they kill me ? Help me, oh Mahomet, help me ! But no, there is no help ! I am murdered ! Give me life ! Ah this is death !

(*Without the tent are heard the shoutings of Patan soldiers, intermingled with a confused noise of dying Rajapoots &c.*)

Cut them to pieces ! Deen ! Deen ! Mawro ! Mawro !
Put the Kaffers to death ! Here they hide their heads ;
there they creep and escape from under the tent !
Seize those fellows ! Shoot them !

Alas ! We are surrounded ; overpowered : no
escaping ! Our poor comrades are massacred ! They
are trodden down ! Ah merciless savages ! We are
deceived ! We are undone !

Holla, fire at them ! Send them all down to hell !
Are they all sabred ? All is over ! Success ! Victory !
Glory ! Huzzah !

*(The stage appears strewed with dead bodies, the
firing ceases, order is restored, profound silence ensues,
curtain drops with slow music)*

SCENE II. A SMALL TENT WELL FURNISHED.

Enter Ameerkhan and his Jemadar.

Ameer. Today our brave troops have behaved
remarkably well. I believe they have sacrificed all the
victims. Well done ! But what is become of *Savoi Sing* ?
Did he escape ?

Jem. No, Sir ; not a single soul, I am sure, has es-
caped from the tent ; which, according to your device,
was so skilfully dropt, that it is impossible for any
one to have come out of it ; and had any succeeded in
this, he could not have escaped being shot from with-
out.

Ameer. That is right ; God be praised ! My plan

is at last crowned with success. But here come the officers of the different corps.

Enter officers, the foremost of them carrying the head of Savoi Sing in a large salver.

Off. We have executed your commands punctually, all *Savoi Sing's* men to the number of about 6 or 7 hundred are killed; here is the trophy of this great exploit. (*They set before him the mangled head of Savoi Sing, which Ameerkhan and his Jemadar look at very attentively, with some affected changes in their countenances, exclaiming frequently aloud "O God! O merciful Allah."*)

Ameer. This is the fate which awaits evil doers.

Off. Yes, it is; but we are sorry to inform your Excellency, that the same fate has befallen your innocent brother-in-law; because he was one of the unfortunate victims, who were slain within the tent.

Ameer. What? My Brother-in-law! That is mournful!—Indeed, the decree of heaven is blind. But how did that happen? (*with tears in his eyes*) Alas! Poor man, the best of my friends! What could have carried him thither? Where was he found dead?

**Off.* We know nothing of the matter; but, some how or other, he happened to be within the tent, when the fire commenced. We found his body stretched on the ground close to that of *Savoi Sing*, both of them shot by many musket bullets.

Ameer. Indeed! It is an unhappy blunder! But how

can that be helped? It was the doom, to which he was predestined by the Almighty will! Be that as it may, send *this* head immediately to *Maun Sing*, that he may feast his eyes on it; because, I know this scull contained many intrigues, and he dreaded it most in the world. Now you may all go to rest yourselves in your tents. I will reward your exertions.

Off. We are all very thankful for your kindness.
(*Exeunt*)

Ameer. Well, Jemadar, what think you now of the measures, which I have taken to destroy this traitor *Savoi Sing* and his party?

Jem. Why, they are both ingenious and just, Sir. As a friend of *Maun Sing*, you have on one hand done your duty to the satisfaction of that Prince; and on the other, as you have cleared the world of this wicked man, who was the scourge of mankind, your general philanthropy is established.

Ameer. Ay, you are in the right; that is my laudable object; but yonder comes my old Khansamah; he always speaks nonsensically, but pretends to have great regard for virtue and religion; let us know what is his opinion about the present affair.

Jem. Oh, Sir, he is nothing but an empty headed simpleton; but—

Enter an old Khansamah, with a melancholy air.

Ameer. Come, Khansamah, what is the matter with thee? Thou seemest to be very sorry; what is become of thy wonted gaiety?

Khan. Why, Sir, the sight of this unjust and dreadful massacre has entirely deprived me of it.

Ameer. So then, thou art sorry, because, I have destroyed my enemies; art thou?

Khan. No, Sir, I am sorry, because you have destroyed your reputation, and rendered yourself odious among mankind.

Ameer. How? In what manner can this my prudent act affect my character?

Khan. It has metamorphosed you so completely that you are not the same person to-day, that you were yesterday; because, hitherto you were the ablest commander, and a brave soldier; but now, you are no more than a detestable perjurer, and a cruel murderer.

Ameer. Thou seemest to be sure, that I have committed perjury!

Khan. The whole world is sure of it. Do you suppose then, that you great folks can keep the world ignorant of your deeds? Does not every se-poy and common porter in the bazar know your having deceived poor *Savoi Sing* by your oaths? And then, of having put him to death in spite of it?

Jem. Well, what then ?

Khan. What then ? Is it not the greatest sin, that a man can commit against his Maker ?

Jem. Oh, by no means. It is as silly as to suppose it a sin, if we ensnare beasts and birds, and then kill them for our use.

Khan. Then, are our fellow creatures to be considered as beasts and birds ?

Jem. Why, I think they are not in the least better ; because they are infidels, do you know ?

Khan. Yes, I do ; but this theory, which you have just adduced, is not new ; because, in certain parts of the world some ingenious people, who are naturally endowed with superior genius, like that of your's, have already put it in practice long ago : they not only slaughter their own species, as you would have us do, but also they eat them with great pleasure. Now do not you allow them a higher degree of reformation than us true believers ?

Ameer. Well, Khansamah, thou hast not yet got better of thy foolish dogmatism. Wouldest thou overturn the whole order of things in the world ? I ask thee, how is it possible for us to acquire power and wealth, unless recourse is had to some stratagem or other occasionally ?

Khan. If you ask my opinion, it is quite unsafe to deviate from the golden rule of doing to others, as we would they should do to us ; and even universal

monarchy is not worth a *courry*, when we are to obtain it at the expence of our conscience.

Amcer. Ha! ha! ha! Be sincere! Wilt thou look at my face, and tell me what thou thinkest, at the bottom of thy heart about the magnificence of royal state, noble buildings, splendid carriages, rich jewels, fine apparel, exquisite delicacies of the table, and all that? Are not these enchanting temptations capable of stifling your poor conscience within your heart?

Khan. Ha! ha! ha! ha! True; the temptations are very strong, indeed; but the ideas of the headache, gout, cholic pain, fever, infirmities of old age, and sickness, the screams of agony, pangs of death, the dismalness of the dark grave, and lastly the terrible notion of perpetual tortures in hell, trample all these temptations under foot, and point out to me clearly the necessity of having conscience for my guide in this sublunary state.

Jem. Ha! ha! ha! ha! It seems some insipid books of beggarly Faqueers, which go by the name of Philosophy, have stuffed his empty head with all these foolish romantic notions of groundless fears.

Khan. Yes, as the Devil has crammed your's with pernicious and blind confidence on the deceitful charms of fortune, and the erroneous opinions about happiness.

Jem. (*to Amcerkhan*) I think his nonsensical speech has something pernicious in its effects; because,

it begins to puzzle my head strangely; but who in the world doubts, that without money and power a man is nothing but a poor two-legged helpless animal? Let this fellow stick to his dull Philosophy, and let us mind our serious business of procuring riches and happiness.

•Ameer. Yes, it is true; to discourse with wrong headed people, is to disturb the peace of our mind; but this man being my old confidential servant, I cannot help loving him. I have very often given him the liberty of speaking his mind to me, and I must not forget that his opinions were very useful upon several occasions.

Jem. Ay, they might have been so upon some trifling occasions; but in the present case, he reasoned very absurdly, and seems to have almost abused that liberty you have given him, by boldly representing our grand political actions in a quite different light from what they really are; he has almost obscured our brilliant exploit by his gloomy reasonings.

Khan. Ha! ha! ha! Strange depravity! (*to Ameerkhan*) I beg your honour will pardon my boldness—I have done my duty in speaking the truth according to my own way, in which I am determined to continue until my life ends. Now I take leave to go to my own business: God grant you long life and success! (*Exit*)

Ameer. A plague on the devilish arguments of this old fellow! They are not easily controverted; but we

need not trouble our heads about them. Let us lose no time to set out for Joudpoor, and demand from *Maun Sing* the promised reward of Jahgeer and money for my services to his state. (*Exeunt*)

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I. A ROOM IN A COUNTRY HOUSE, IN THE
NEIGHBOURHOOD OF OODAIPOOR

Enter Ameerkhan.

Maun Sing has already rewarded my services according to his promise. The marriages between *Dhokul Sing* and the sister of *Jaggut Sing*, and another between the daughter of *Maun Sing* and *Jaggut Sing* have at last taken place, through my mediation. This double alliance has brought on a perfect reconciliation between the Rajahs of Jaipoor and Joudpoor. But I am afraid it will not last long; because the beautiful *Kishun Koovur* still lives; of course, blind Cupid will, in course of a very short time, rekindle in both their former passion, and thus bring on another bloody war between them. Yes, there is no safety, unless this baneful cause is removed entirely. But it depends upon what will be the result of my mission to *Adjeet Sing*.

Enter Khansamah.

Ameer. Have you seen the Durbar of *Maha Rannah*?

Khan. Not only seen it, Sir, but I am well informed of all the characters and dispositions of the people thereof.

Ameer. Ay, that is very clever! What sort of men does it consist of?

Khan. It consists of inconsiderate and barbarous generals, a rash soldiery, rapacious civilians, tyrannical ministers, superstitious brahmins, crafty priests, deceitful astrologers, intriguing courtiers, prodigal nobles, ignorant relations, designing sycophants, abject slaves of both sexes, and lastly of blockheads and knaves of all descriptions.

Ameer. The most ridiculous and heterogeneous mass, indeed! But what are the talents of the king *Maha Rana*?

Khan. Why, Sir, he is naturally a man of very good disposition. He knows how to bathe, to eat, to drink, to dress, to enjoy his pleasures, and to perform his daily worship, attend to some ridiculous unmeaning ceremonies, which either the bramins or astrologers now and then prescribe to appease, as they say, the wrath of some unpropitious stars and deities, but in fact to gain their own advantages.

Ameer. Are there not any virtuous and wise people in the Durbar?

Khan. Ay, there are many; but as it is not their proper element, they only float on the surface of it, and never attempt to dive to the bottom, for fear

of being devoured by some huge animals which infest it.

Ameer. The Hindoo Rajah is a poor helpless creature, indeed; but what education do they give him in his youth?

Khan. The brahmins, who are entrusted with the education of the Hindoo Princes, generally initiate them into all their superstitious mysteries of priestcraft, then the flatterers on one side, and temptation on the other, corrupt both their head and heart to a degree, exceeding belief.

Ameer. Well, if this be the case, how do they govern their subjects?

Khan. Good God! Do you think the Princes govern their people? No; on the contrary, they are led on by their nose by courtiers, priests, flatterers, and women.

Ameer. Ha! ha! ha! ha! I am quite delighted with the picture, which you have given me of the *Maha Ranah's* Court, and I hope I shall succeed in my design.

Khan. So I wish you success in all your just undertakings. (*Exit*)

Enter Jemadar.

Ameer. Have you succeeded in your errand?

Jem. Completely, Sir; I found *Adjeet Sing* to be a very useful man, because he is the greatest fa-

avourite of *Maha Ranah*. I think he can act his part to our satisfaction.

Ameer. Can he? It is very lucky; but how is it possible for him to persuade his master so far, as to consent to put an end to the life of his lovely daughter *Kishun Koovur*?

Jem. He assured me, that he could do it easily, adding likewise, that if he did not succeed, in persuading the *Rajah* in this case, he could effect it in some other way; and after all, he is so fond of money, that I do not think he will hesitate, even to sell his master's crowned head to you, if you would offer him a proper prize for it.

Ameer. He seems, then, to be a man of business and activity.

Jem. To be sure! He is a man of spirit, and partakes so much of our brave race, that I cannot help doubting the chastity of his mother. Do you understand me, Sir? Ha! ha! ha! ha!

Ameer. Ay, perfectly well; ha! ha! ha! ha! but there are some among us, who are as timid as *Hindoos*, and some among *Hindoos*, who are as bold as *Patans*; for instance, what think you about our old *Khansamah*? Does he not resemble the talkative *brahmin*, though he is a genuine *musselman*?

Jem. You are in the right, Sir. I think much depends on the bodily and mental powers, which every one brings along with him into the world, according to his predestination.

Ameer. Be that as it may, it is very true, that the establishment of peace and amity between the Rajahs of Jaipoor and Joudpoor is of great advantage to us; but the necessity we are under, to make it permanent at the expence of a poor Princess' life is indeed a very disagreeable alternative: is it not?

Jem. Pugh! It is nothing but the common course of things. A noble high ranked personage, like you, must always have public good for your principal object, in attaining which, you must not hesitate to sacrifice the life of any individual whatever.

Ameer. Ay, that is the strongest motive, which certainly justifies my deed! But when I consider her innocence, beauty, and other accomplishments, I cannot help pitying her.

Jem. Very true! But what use is her beauty to you? Can you have her for your Mistress? No, never; because, these rascals the Hindoos, in general, consider us worse than Christians and Thayds (Parriars); and I think, we have some reason to kill her; because, she possesses killing beauty. Ha! ha! ha!

Ameer. Ha! ha! ha! ha! You are the accutest reasoner, that I ever saw in my life: Let us remain here and wait the result of our masterly scheme, which has already begun to work. (*Exeunt*)

SCENE II. A SALOON IN THE PALACE OF OODAIPOOR.

Enter Maha Ranah, and Adjeet Sing.

Maha. *Adjeet Sing*, why, you look so pale and pensive today—

Adjeet. Pensive? To be sure! An anticipation of being buried alive in an expected earthquake must make one so.

Maha. An earthquake? How, what do you mean?

Adjeet. Why, Sir, I mean, that our kingdom shall within a few days hence be the principal seat of a destructive war, between the great Potentates of Rajapootanah; and that we are certainly going to fall a sacrifice to the burning rage of contending parties.

Maha. Pshaw! Foolish fears! Pray, what should be the cause of this your imaginary war?

Adjeet. Cause, Sir? Your Daughter; the amiable Princess *Kishun Koovur* is the cause of it.

Maha. My Daughter the cause of war? How?

Adjeet. Because, her noble birth in Your most illustrious family, her incomparable beauty, and other valuable endowments have so completely fascinated the minds of all the Rajahs, that every one of them is anxious to possess her hand; and in consequence, an obstinate war, between these suitors, is inevitable; Don't You see?

Maha. Yes, it seems propable; but why should we involve ourselves in this war? Let us remain neutral, and we shall have nothing to fear from it.

Adjeet. Oh! Sir, when war rages with all its fury at the very vestibule of our palace, the neutrality on our part is impossible.

Maha. Is it? Then let us join one of the Rajahs, and try our chance in that way.

Adjeet. You are in the wrong, Sir; because the Prince whom You would choose for your Ally, will first demand Your daughter in marriage.

Maha. Very well, let him marry her; what then?

Adjeet. There You are mistaken again, because all the other disappointed suitors will form a strong confederacy against both of you; and then, having overpowered You by their united forces, will unmercifully ransack Your capital, pillage Your palace, and make You and all Your family prisoners of war; and if so, who knows, what horrible fate awaits the new married couple, in the heat of the action! Perhaps, rape will be committed and our helpless *Kishun Koovur*, forced by some merciless ravisher, may have recourse to suicide as the only means to save the honour of her family. As to our country, it may probably be divided among the confederate Princes.

Maha. God have mercy upon us! The picture you have just drawn seems to me more horrible than an earthquake, deluge, and even death itself; but I trust God will help suffering virtue.

Adjeet. Ha! ha! ha! These are foolish hopes! Leave them to the idle brahmins, and let us seriously consider about some proper means, to avoid the impending danger.

Maha. Alas! What is to be done? My mind is quite perplexed! I think it advisable to declare to all

the Rajahs, that my daughter shall marry none ; but shall remain a virgin devotee all her lifetime.

Adjeet. Ay, this plan will parry off the war ; but as it is contrary to the law, it will not fail to expose You to the ridicule of the people, and to bring a perpetual odium upon Your noble family.

Maha. That is right enough. The most vexatious, insurmountable difficulty indeed ! I can neither marry her to any Prince, nor keep her without marriage ! Can you propose any method of extricating myself from this dilemma ?

Adjeet. Yes, I think I can ; but—

Maha. Why are you embarrassed, my friend ? Tell me your mind freely. You know I have no other confident but you to depend upon in this delicate affair.

Adjeet. Yes, I know ; and that alone is the cause of my hesitation and embarrassment.

Maha. Strange paradox ! How is that to be accounted for ?

Adjeet. Why, because the measure I would propose to You is seemingly so horrible, that I cannot help trembling at the very thought of it. I attempt to speak, but the words die on my lips ; and yet I think the measure is indispensably necessary, and the only one we can adopt in this critical juncture.

Maha. Pray, don't keep me in suspense : tell me any thing you think proper ; I am already prepared for the worst.

Adjeet. I humbly request, Your Highness will pardon my boldness—Do You remember the cruel custom, which certain tribes of Khuttries observe, when the birth of a female child takes place in their families?

Maha. Ay: these wretches are said, to put their female children to death, for want of proper means, as they say, to settle them honourably in the world, when they are grown up.

Adjeet. Yes, that is it. This hint is, I think, quite enough. I need say no more.

Maha. God be merciful! Now, I understand what you mean: you would have me follow this diabolical custom! Would you? Oh, no; never! never! My lovely *Kishun Koovur* is the dearest of all that I possess in the world. I will with all my heart, sacrifice my own life, to save her's! O God! even to think of this atrocious brutality, is worse than death! Oh! what made your heart all at once so dead to every feeling? Ah! my throat is choaked! No! I can utter no more.

Adjeet. I know, and I have already told You, that the act is very cruel; but the public good, and the honour of Your family, require, that we should have recourse to some bold measure, even against the feelings of nature.

Maha. Enough, enough! Hold your tongue! This is brutal ferocity, surely; yea, the brutes even will shame us. Ah! never mind, let my kingdom

and every thing else go to ruin and destruction ; but let my *Kishun Koovur* live !

Adjeet. I own, Sir, these emotions are natural and praiseworthy in a good Prince, like You ; but the world, You know, is always busy in disappointing the just, and persecuting the innocent.

Maha. Yes : but I hope, Divine Mercy will at last be manifested in the preservation of virtue.

Adjeet. Oh chimerical hopes, founded on the old school-maxims ! I know the divine hands are as busy in the ruin of innocence, as in that of piety.

Maha. Well, what then ? How can we help it ?

Adjeet. Why, Sir, when heaven afflicts us with its injustice, You must resort to the help of the Devil to counteract it ! Do You know what I mean ?

Maha. Ay, very clearly ; but no, I would rather endure the afflicting hand of God, than be cured by the hand of the Devil. (*Exit*)

Adjeet Sing, alone.

A plague upon these obstacles ! The Rajah is so obstinate and inflexible, that I cannot persuade him to coincide with my views. Is there not any other way to put an end to the life of the Princess ? No, I do not think it practicable, unless some one of her immediate female servants or relations can be bribed to assist me ; but whom could I employ ? The least imprudence in this matter will cost me my life ! Is not *Chandboi*, the aunt of *Kishun Koovur*, the proper

person? Yes, it is she only, who possesses manly courage and expertness, an energetic mind, not common to her sex; but here she comes.

Enter Chandboi.

Adjeet. You are well come *Chandboi*; how do you do? It is long time since I have had the honour of seeing you.

Chand. I am very well, I thank you, Sir; but what was the purport of your long conference with His Highness my brother?

Adjeet. Oh, Madam, the secret upon which we conversed together is of very great importance; but the *Rana* your brother is inconceivably stubborn, and as immoveable as a rock, and cannot be roused to any action whatever.

Chand. Ay, that is his way; but, will you be so kind as to let me into the secret?

Adjeet. Yes, I will do it on condition, that you will promise me solemnly, not to divulge it, and to assist me in this affair, as far as it lies in your power.

Chand. Oh, upon my life, I will not abuse your confidence; but only tell me what the matter is, that I may see whether I can in any way be useful to you.

Adjeet. As to the matter, it appertains solely to the public good of the country: your familiarity with and your free access to the person of *Kishun Koovur*

never leaves me any doubt of your success, if you will but lend your powerful aid.

Chand. You still leave me in doubt! Do you wish then to attain your object through the great, but baneful influence of this haughty Princess with her father the Rajah?

Adjeet. No; I desire to attain my object by the total extinction of both her influence, and her life at once.

Chand. Do you? That is very just. It is very true, she is a beautiful girl, but her pride is insufferable. Be that however as it may, tell me in what manner, her existence proves to be repugnant to the public welfare.

Adjeet. Why, Madam, the fame of her beauty, having rendered her the idol of all the Princes, has multiplied the number of suitors amazingly; and the consequence is, that an everlasting war is very likely to ensue among them, and our poor country is going to be crushed under its deadly weight. Do you understand me now?

Chand. Ay, quite plainly; but did you explain to my brother clearly, that the safety of his country and of himself depends entirely upon his getting rid of his daughter?

Adjeet. Yes; I have exhausted all my rhetoric, and have almost silenced him by my arguments, and by pointing out to him, the well known instance of

the Khuttries putting their children to death, for the sake of their honour.

Chand. Well, and what was the result ?

Adjeet. Why, it was quite the reverse of what I had expected ; because, he seems to be resolved to preserve his daughter, at the expense of his honour, his dignity, his kingdom, and even of his own life.

Chand. Is he ? A poor wrong-headed Prince indeed ! But, did he give you any reasons for his resolution ?

Adjeet. No ; none whatever. His head seems to be puzzled by some old foolish maxims of morality and religion, and a jargon of words which they contain ; because, he talks of the Divine Mercy, the rewards and punishments in the next world, the advantages of virtue and a good conscience, and many such things besides.

Chand. Pugh ! Nonsense ! He must have imbibed these romantic notions from some idle bramins, I assure you ; but since he thinks so highly of the happiness of the next world, why does he hesitate to send his daughter thither a little sooner ?

• *Adjeet.* Ha ! ha ! ha ! Your reasons are very strong ; but your brother is so weak, that nothing can rouse him from his mental lethargy—and none can persuade him to act like a Prince : therefore let us give him up for lost, and for his sake and for his country's, let us rather bestir ourselves in this affair,

and effect by our united exertions that, which pure philanthropy requires of us. Do you know ?

Chand. Yes, I do ; and I know likewise how to settle this business in the genteelest manner possible ; but the reward I expect for my trouble must be proportionate to the risk I run in this case.

Adjeet. Ay, to be sure ; *Ameerkhan* will take care of that. But for the present accept this from me, as a token of my esteem. (*Gives her a purse full of gold mohurs*).

Chand. I thank you for your liberality. (*Exit*)

Adjeet. The appearances are promising, and indicate speedy success. I must lose no time to inform *Ameerkhan* of what has passed : and this opportunity must not be suffered to slip. A proper arrangement must be made about the reward, which he has offered me ; for these men of business will soon forget their promises, when they have attained their purpose. No ! I will not be deceived tho'. As to *Chandboi*, I have in the mean time satisfied her with some trifles ; and in regard to my other promises, she need not be over-sanguine. (*Exit*)

SCENE III. AN ELEGANT APARTMENT OF
KISHUN KOOVUR.

Enter Kishun Koovur and her maid.

Kishun. It is true, my Father intends to marry me soon to some virtuous Prince of his own choosing ;

but then I must have a new set of superior jewels, adorned with gems, which will suit the occasion, and set off my person to advantage. Don't you think so ?

Maid. Yes ; those glittering pebbles are necessary to those only, who would dazzle the eyes of their lovers by the lustre of these stones ; because they know their persons alone are not capable of doing it. But as for *you*, whose charms are so captivating, I do not think you need any such auxiliaries to enchant the world.

Kishun. I thank you for your compliment ; but I doubt whether my intended husband will be of your opinion ?

Maid. You may try if you like, and see whether there is any man in this world, who can be a proof against that pair of sparkling eyes. Is not that bewitching smile alone capable of melting any adamant heart, though it be proof against every soft passion ?

Kishun. You may flatter me in any way you like, but the mirror tells me, that my face has nothing extraordinary in it.

Maid. This your modesty and humility are the finishing touches of heaven, which give your person an air of negligent beauty, equal to that of Venus, I assure you ; but here comes your aunt, she wishes perhaps to speak with you in private. I must retire now. (*Exit*)

Enter Chandboi with a grave melancholy countenance.

Kishun. How do you do, my dear aunt? What makes your bright visage so pale today?

Chand. Ay, my love, my health is as good as I can wish it to be; but I am so dismayed by some unpropitious circumstances, that I cannot by any efforts whatever prevent my face from betraying the disordered state of my mind.

Kishun. You frighten me, indeed! Pray, will you be so kind as to let me know, what those circumstances are?

Chand. Yes, I will; but the very blood of my heart freezes within me, when I attempt to acquaint you with the cause of my sorrow: for the shock, which it must give to your mind, will be too violent to be borne by your tender frame.

Kishun. Well, if it be so, I think it necessary, that I should insist on knowing it.

Chand. Then, I must tell you plainly, that you alone are the sole cause of our misfortune; for your extraordinary beauty, your good disposition, excellent sense and many other superior qualities, instead of being a blessing to our family, are unluckily become the scourge of whole Rajapootanah, so that the ruin of our country and family is inevitable. Do you understand?

Kishun. Not clearly. God have mercy! I the cause of ruin? How is that?

Chand. Be composed ; I will explain the matter fully. They say, that the fame of your beauty and other accomplishments, having multiplied the number of your suitors, who are Potentates of Rajapootanah, a very destructive war is soon to break out among them, and our country and capital are very likely to fall a sacrifice to the rage of the parties ; and in consequence, the honour of our family is at stake ; because the furious invaders will not fail to commit all sorts of excesses : and then, as to the safety of our persons, what think you about it ? No ! for shame I cannot proceed farther—my voice fails me.

Kishun. Now I understand your meaning. Alas ! I am an unfortunate wretch ! Would to God, I had not been born at all in this family !

Chand. Oh, my dear, it would have been better indeed ! But it is too late now to wish so ; all the members of our family are thrown into such a consternation, that they are at a loss how to extricate themselves from the danger which threatens them. As to your parents, their grief knows no bounds ; and they intend—no, my tongue denies me utterance.

Kishun. Why do you hesitate, my dear aunt ? Go on, let me know the worst. What is their intention, pray ?

Chand. Oh, my dear, I tremble at the very thought, but I cannot help mentioning. They seem to be determined to put an end to their own existence ; because they know that death alone can rescue them

from the woeful misery of seeing, with their own eyes, the pillage of their capital, and the dishonourable treatment of their family.

Kishun. God have mercy upon them! These are most horrible news indeed! But why did they not all this time inform me of these dreadful circumstances? Why are they so circumspect in their conversation with me?

Chand. They have their reasons to be so, because they dare not vex you, whom they love more than their life.

Kishun. Very true; that appears to be the case; but is there not any way to prevent this misfortune? May we not at least hope the intercession of Heaven in behalf of such virtuous parents? (*weeps*)

Chand. Ah! Poor, innocent, lovely creature! Now a-days, virtue being the victim of vice, and innocence a prey to intrigue, alas! we cannot expect any such miracle in our favour. (*pretends to weep*)

Kishun. Is God then so cruel, as to suffer us poor helpless creatures to perish by the injustice of our merciless enemies?

Chand. Why, is not the blindness of the divine decree become quite proverbial among the learned? And does not the wrath of Heaven descend on both the criminal and innocent promiscuously? Are not the most detestible barbarians and tyrants always victorious and prosperous in the world, while the poor are subjected to their tyrannical sway? Are not

whole nations, which consist of good and wicked, either swept away by war and pestilence, or swallowed up by earthquakes or volcanoes? Therefore, we must not cherish the foolish hopes of any help from above.

Kishun. The most shocking truths indeed! But what think you about the blessings, which are promised to the votaries of virtue in the next world?

Chand. Ay, our books and brahmins always assure us, that perfect happiness is not to be found in this, but only in the world to come.

Kishun. Do they? Then I think it will be both prudent and necessary to bid farewell to this miserable world, and flee to the happy regions of paradise.

Chand. A very bold step indeed! But it is not an uncommon one, in India; because some virtuous individuals of our sex burn themselves with their dead husbands, for fear of dishonour incident to widowhood. Among us, you know, these are called Suttees.

Kishun. Yes, now I think on it: your argument is a very decisive one. This noble instance of self-devotion and voluntary death of Suttees has strengthened my resolution of finishing my wretched career.

Chand. Oh, mercy on me! Are you then resolved to put an end to your life?

Kishun. I am; because nothing else can save the life of my parents, the state of Oodaipoor, and the honour of my noble family.

Chand. Ah! What do I hear? Every one of your words pierces my heart, like a fiery arrow. I will most willingly sacrifice my own life to save your's; but alas! (*pretends to weep*) it will not avail any thing.

Kishun. Now, my dear aunt, you shall not die, it is I that deserve it; because I am charged with the capital crime of having beauty. (*weeps*)

Chand. No, my dear, can I screen this valuable gem, this angel, from the eyes of people by flight? No vain attempt can conceal her shining beauty!

Kishun. My beauty, call it rather my misfortune: it is my malady. And I am resolved to be cured of it by a dose or two of poison. Yes, that is the surest specific. Will you be so kind as to procure me a potion of it?

Chand. I to procure you poison? Mercy on me! No, I dare not even think of it. (*trembles*)

Kishun. Pshaw, my dear aunt, do not indulge this weakness; throw it aside, and be useful to me this last time. I am resolved to surpass Suttée by my courage; come, make haste, go and fetch me a chalice of powerful poison. Won't you?

Chand. No, my dear, I will not; I would rather die than to render you this dismal service.

Kishun. Well, then, if you deprive me of these gentle means, the *pougnard* may as well decide my fate; but no, I cannot handle it well; the tank or well, any thing will serve my purpose, you know?

Chand. Ah! Is it come to that extremity? Well, then, I will go, and bring the chalice: let us both taste it at once, and leave this world together. (*aside*) This scene affects me in spite of myself. My heart begins to palpitate violently! But no, since I have begun, I must finish it. (*Goes and returns with a chalice, which she fills and presents to Kishun Koovur*)

Kishun. (*to the cup*) Well, my friend, I choose thee as the safest vehicle, to carry me to the next world! O woeful world! Adieu to thee and thy miseries, for ever! (*drinks*). Ay, it is as bitter as my life! Well, my dear aunt, fill me another.

Chand. (*Fills another cup, with tears in her eyes*) Oh my dear, I will not survive you, (*attempts to carry it to her mouth, under pretence of drinking it herself; but Kishun Koovur snatches it from her*)

Kishun. No, my dear aunt, you shall live, and let my parents know, that I die for them and their country. Do you know? O God! have mercy upon my soul (*drinks*). Ah! It operates already. Strange sensations! I know death approaches; but enough. Give me more—

(*Chandboi gives her a third cup, which Kishun Koovur applies to her mouth, exclaiming aloud, with a faltering voice*). Oh God! This is the marriage to which I was foredoomed. (*drinks, falls convulsed on her pillow, and dies*). *Chandboi* rushes out of the

apartment, and gives the alarm of the sudden death of the Princess)

Enter Queen, with some of her female attendants.

Queen. Oh! my *Kishun Koovur*, my dear, my love, my angel, where art thou gone? Why hast thou left me behind? Wilt not thou speak with me? Oh! What has become of thy sweet words? Where are thy smiles? Alas! Every thing is hushed in deadly silence! All is over! My hopes are frustrated! I am undone! I am ruined! No, I can't endure! Gloomy darkness surrounds me every where! I can see nothing—(*she falls down in a deep swoon, and is carried away by her servants.*)

SCENE CHANGES TO A GREAT PLACE OF AUDIENCE,
CROWDED BY COURTIERS, SERVANTS, &c.

Enter Maha Ranah, supported by Adjeet Sing and servants, sobbing: his face bedewed with tears, which flow in torrents from his eyes.

Maha. (*leaning on his pillow*) O! *Adjeet Sing*! Why did God hurl such dreadful thunder upon my head? Alas! What could have been her motive in killing herself by poison?

Adjeet. God knows, what it was; but it is more than propable, that being well informed of the dangers, with which this kingdom is threatened on her account, she might have chosen this way of putting an end to her life, and thereby to all our troubles, at once.

Enter Sugvan Sing the Chief of Karaḍar, almost breathless.

Sugvan. (To Maha Ranah) Is the Princess dead or alive?

Adjeet. Do not disturb the grief of a father or a lost child.

Sugvan. (Unbuckling a sword, which with his shield he lays at the feet of Maha Ranah) My ancestors have served Your's more than thirty generations, and to You I cannot utter what I feel; but these arms shall never more be used in Your service. (To Adjeet Sing) As for thee, villain, who hast brought this ignominy upon the Rajapoot name, may the curse of a father light upon thee! Mayest thou die childless!

(Exeunt.)

THE END.
